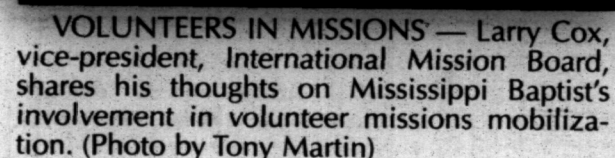


JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

SINCE 1877

VOL. 124

No. 40



Vessels video released

Texans defend entities

Letters to the editor

Sunday School lessons

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The Partnership Missions Celebration banquet was held at 6:30 p.m., November 10 at First Church, Jackson, with 273 people in attendance.

The banquet kicked off a weekend event designed to showcase partnership missions in Mississippi, with discussion groups and seminars to encourage a broader awareness and involvement in missions through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The theme, One God, One World, was carried throughout the event by a host of speakers and leaders representing many different venues of mission work.

The banquet, sponsored by the Partnership Missions Department of the MBCB, hosted among its participants individuals from states including North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Texas, Arkansas, and Kentucky. Also present were several retired missionaries and active missionaries from both the

International Mission Board (IMB) and the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

The banquet featured reports from several participants in partnership missions, including:

- Jim and Jane Baldwin, fieldside coordinators, Honduras.
- Archie and Virginia Crawford, fieldside coordinators, Honduras.
- David Lee, executive director, Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.
- Thomas and June Nolan, fieldside coordinators, Ukraine.
- Ken Lyle, contract consultant, MBCB partnership missions department.

A presentation encouraging volunteer mission mobilization was shared by Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) vice-president Larry Cox.

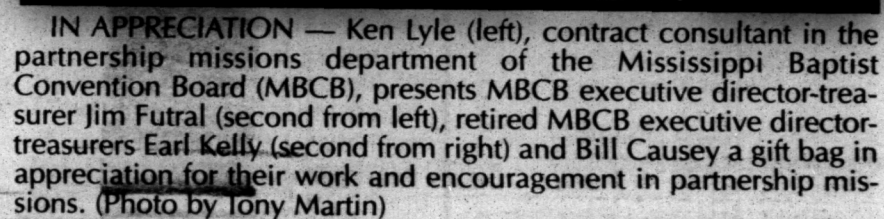
One of the highlights of the evening was when partnership missions director Paul Harrell invited Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer, to join him on the platform along with Earl Kelly and Bill Causey, former MBCB executive director-treasurers.

Harrell used the occasion and the presence of Kelly, Causey, and Futral to chart the progression of partnership missions in Mississippi.

During Kelly's tenure from 1973-89, the concept of partnership missions began. Kelly initiated international partnerships in 1981 with Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay and in 1989 with Japan.

He was instrumental in moving Mississippi into a partnership with California in 1979.

Causey, whose tenure lasted from 1989-98, broadened



Mississippi's involvement in partnerships by involving Mississippi Baptists in work in Illinois, Zimbabwe, Alaska, Honduras, Colorado, and Venezuela.

In 1991 he initiated the Partnership Missions Office, inviting Bill Hardy to serve as partnership coordinator.

Futral, who began his ministry in September 1998, has continued the work through partnerships with Maryland/Delaware, Ukraine, and Honduras.

Futral has also been involved in NAMB's work in Boston, a NAMB strategic focus city. By recognizing the need for addi-

tional help, he affirmed Ken Lyle's coming in August of this year to network Mississippi Baptists with Boston and Impact Northeast.

According to Harrell, Mississippi Baptists are involved in five simultaneous partnerships.

This has resulted in processing 1,590 volunteers engaged in 102 projects. These projects have resulted in 5,620 professions of faith.

In the year to date, Mississippi Baptists have been involved in nine international partnerships and seven state-side partnerships.

Mississippi Convention Program (CP) gifts to the work of the Lord for the month of October topped \$2,000,000 for the third month in a row and for the eighth month this fiscal year, according to Jim Farnal, executive director/treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson. The October CP total was \$2,071,713, or 14.26% less than the \$2,415,190 given in September 2010, and 10% less than the \$2,071,428 given in the same period last year. Gifts for the current fiscal year are \$884,553, or 5.66% ahead of last year's record pace.

The 2000 CP budget for 100,000 messengers to the 1999 Mississippi Baptist Convention is \$28,083,349. The 2001 CP budget, on services to messengers to the October 31-November 1 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, is another record amount: \$30,047,997. The 2001 budget will go into effect in January.

Mississippi CP helps fund such activities as the Special Ministries Retreat on November 17-18 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton; The Celebrate Jesus 2000 gathering on November 27 at Grace Temple Church in Gulfport; and the African American Church Leadership Institute on December 8 at North Jackson Church, Jackson.

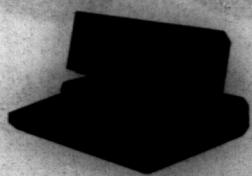
NAACP (N.A.A.A.P.)—October 1999
Baptist Church of America (B.C.A.)—October 1999
3.27% of the population
Morris H. Chace, president and chief executive officer

A total of \$14,800,000 was received in Baptist missions and ministries globally and America, compared to \$14,031,208.45 in October fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

In designated giving during October, \$2,265,186.60 was 10.26% below the October 1997 level of \$2,521,179.18. For the SBC Cooperative Program Budget, the \$14,489,661 in CP giving was 103% of the \$13,999,698. For the SBC Cooperative Program Budget, the \$14,489,661 in CP giving was 103% of the \$13,999,698.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions, and fellowships for distribution according to the 2000-2001 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget. The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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A snapshot of the real Mississippi

Mississippians from Southaven to Tupelo to Pascagoula to Picayune are rejoicing this week in the news that Nissan Motor Company intends to build a billion-dollar, state-of-the-art truck manufacturing facility in Madison County that will bring thousands of jobs to the state.

Television and newspapers have been filled with glowing reports of the manifold benefits that such a once-in-a-lifetime industrial behemoth will bring to our impoverished state.

Nissan officials describe how the quality of the state's work force and infrastructure led them to Mississippi. They estimate how many miles of high-tech communications lines will be needed to support the plant, and how many two-digit hourly wage jobs will be created.

Politicians crow about their contributions to the project, patting themselves and each other on the back and talking about how they worked together across political party and racial lines to make the new plant a reality.

Mississippi is filled with honest, hard-working people who love their Lord, their state, and their jobs. They will do fine work for Nissan, and the company will not be disappointed.

All in all, Mississippi comes out looking pretty good — and that's certainly fitting. It's about time the state's citizens and way of life were showcased all over the country (and world, for that matter).

However, there is a dark side to the Mississippi way of life that, like an infected wound that won't heal, festers daily at the crossroads where legalized alcohol and gambling intersect. No one likes to talk about that subject, however.

Legalizing alcohol, of course, was supposed to be the end of all our problems in Mississippi. Then came legalized gambling, when it became apparent that alcohol wasn't going to live up to all the promises. Gambling was the solution, we were told.

In the bright, shining lies that are the gambling houses of Mississippi, two of the

greatest scourges known to man have been brought together for the ruination of many an unsuspecting Mississippian.

The Wall Street Journal, in a detailed investigative article that appeared in the October 23 issue, presents a damning portrait of the kind of people we have become in Mississippi.

Written by Joseph T. Hallinan and headlined: At Riverboat Casinos, the Free Drinks Come With a Tragic Toll, the article describes in devastating detail the high price exacted from individuals and communities along the Mississippi River where gambling has been legalized and the liquor flows free to casino patrons.

Mississippi tragedies figure prominently in the article. Following is a redacted version of only one of the incidents personally observed by the Journal reporter:

Like all casinos in Mississippi the Grand (in Tunica) is a place where the bars never close and the drinks are always free. Sitting alone at one of the casino's 3,200 slot machines is Michael J. Kennedy, a 64-year-old man from Senatobia. He is wearing a tattered gray herringbone sport coat, white athletic socks, and a pair of black wingtips so worn that the sides have split.

Tonight, Mr. Kennedy's life isn't so wonderful. His hands grip both sides of the slot machine's coin tray. His head hangs down between his arms, and saliva drips from his mouth and pools on the leg of his pants.

A waitress arrives with a tray of drinks and hands Mr. Kennedy a glass of Crown Royal. Moments later, Mr. Kennedy keels over, tumbling to the floor. For a minute or two he lies on the floor, struggling to right himself as a small crowd gathers. A security guard arrives and squats down to talk with Mr. Kennedy. Still on

the floor, Mr. Kennedy fishes a crumpled \$5 bill from a pocket and begs the guard for change to play the slots.

Soon Mr. Kennedy is wheeled off the casino floor. Someone places a clear plastic bag over the wet and soiled chair where Mr. Kennedy had been sitting. But the bag serves as no deterrent. Within minutes, another gambler takes his place.

Now, there's a snapshot of our state that you won't see in any slick industrial recruitment brochures — a man who should be planning his retirement sitting drunkenly and drooling, in his own urine and excrement for hours, begging with his last five dollars for more change to keep gambling. Then, after he is wheeled out, someone else quickly takes his place in the filthy chair.

Welcome to the real Mississippi, Nissan.



GUEST OPINION: Passing the test of time

By Warren Fortson, member
Pinelake Church, Brandon

What is time? Who created it? Who controls it? How much of it do you have? How are you using it? How much is prime time? How much is spare time? How much is prayer time? How much do you have left?

Almighty God created time — a minuscule part of eternity allocated to man by God, who controls it and has the power to lengthen or shorten it according to his will and wisdom.

The way we use time is decided by our choices and according to our established priorities. We do not know at any time how much time we have left.

Actually, time is the only thing that we do have while we are here on earth and we will ultimately be judged by how we used our time.

Do you find that your daily agenda has very little time allocated to prayer? Has your prayer time become your spare time? If you have allowed this to happen, it is a sure indication

that your faith is going weak.

Almighty God deserves your prime time.

If you have allowed this situation to develop to the point that your prayer time is being invaded by your daily agenda, you are one of many professing Christians who are trying to assume control

of your life by putting things ahead of God.

God should be first in your life. He will accept no other place. He knows your situation. He loves you. He saved you. Yet you have allowed things and situations to develop that have crowded him out.

Let me speak from experience.



You cannot be happy or successful under these circumstances. God will take care of all those things in your life if you will restore him to first place.

Set your alarm clock for three o'clock in the morning for a special time of prayer. Demonstrate to God that he is truly first in your life. He can and will hear and honor your prayers when you come to his throne of grace in complete humility.

While you are telling him all those things he already knows, he will remind you of what he did for you upon Calvary. Seek his will, and then seek his advice on how to do his will.

You will wake up the next morning refreshed, and a lot of the things that bothered you won't be there any more.

This will be a true test of faith. Try it, for you truly need to know how much you have.

Fortson is a retired industrial engineer and a deacon at Pinelake Church, Brandon.

Couple's witness transforming complex

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — In downtown Louisville, Ky., police knew the 550 Apartments complex as a place of prostitution, gangs, violence, and drugs. Residents knew it as a place of broken glass and glass ceilings.

Michael Puskar and his wife, Netta, saw the subsidized housing complex as a mission field.

Now, nearly three years after the Puskars began working at the 550, God has produced much fruit from their labor and love.

Netta started managing the apartments shortly after Michael brought the family to Louisville to attend Southern Seminary. Michael soon joined his wife as the maintenance supervisor.

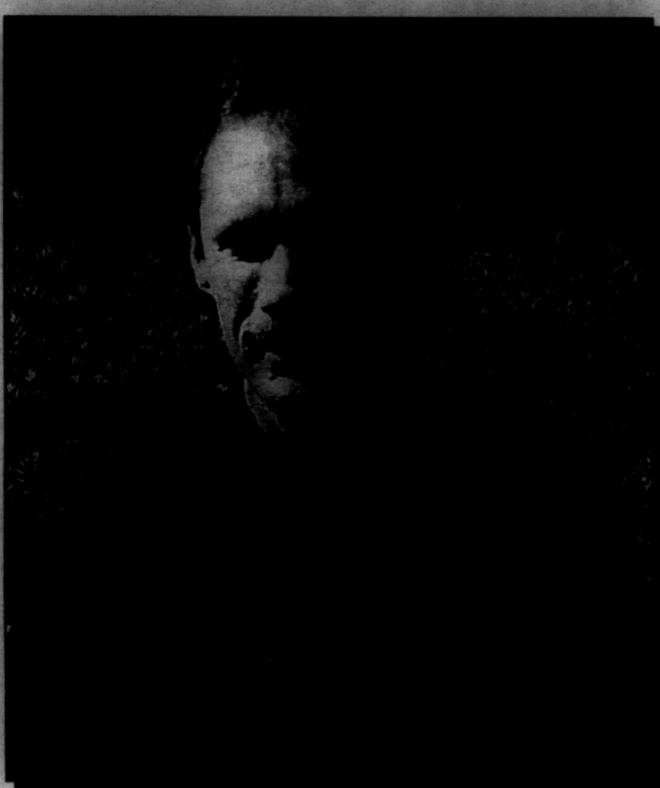
"When we entered that property, it was unsafe — a lot of drugs and alcohol and prostitution," said Michael, a master of church music student from Parachute, Colo. "They [the police] recommended everybody leave by 5 p.m."

And at first the Puskars considered leaving their jobs completely for safer vocations.

"We were wanting to leave the property, but God had big plans for this property," Michael said.

Even as police officers served arrest warrants — sometimes six a day — the Puskars stayed and served Christ and the residents in both word and deed.

"In this kind of ministry, what we've learned is this: You can go out and tell words to folks. But people have heard enough words," Michael said. "They want to see Christ. Man is selfish, and people are used



Puskar

to selfishness. They want to see sacrifice."

Enduring the fear, intimidation, and spiritual attacks, the Puskars selflessly served, prayer-walked, and loved the complex.

"We just kept ministering to and loving the people for a year," Michael said. "After the first summer, God started cleaning house."

Also during that first summer, the Puskars began to reach out to residents by putting on neighborhood "foods." Sponsoring music and speakers, they would raise money to buy meals for the impoverished tenants.

The fellowships furnished the residents with a few hours of fun and safety.

"This was new for the residents because they were afraid to come out — especially the widows," Michael said.

After several more similar events and continued love, the Puskars have seen a complete change in the tenants. Many of them have been saved.

"There were tenants who used to cuss me. Now they pray with me," Michael said.

Police even contacted the apartment office concerned. The officers hadn't issued a warrant in six months.

Even with this success, the work continues for Michael and Netta. This July, the Puskars hosted an all-day carnival. Clowns, choirs, booths, and burgers entertained and uplifted residents, as more than 150 were fed spiritu-

ally and physically. God saved four people that day.

"God wanted to do a God-sized thing," Michael said. "The beautiful picture was to see the widows come out and have a meal and watch children laugh and play."

The Puskars' ministry is fueled by a work the Lord has done in their own lives.

Raised in the music industry and radically saved at age 15, Michael began his Christian life as a "Jesus freak." Yet, several years later, he "got prodigal" — playing in bands and drifting from the Lord.

When he married Netta in 1991, the wayward son returned home to Christ. Leaving the nightclub business and looking for a new start, he moved his family to Colorado.

"We had a thorn in our nest, and a hunger in our heart," Michael said.

In Colorado, the Puskars were disciplined, and their hunger for God grew.

"We didn't know anything about anything," Michael said of his spiritual knowledge. "We didn't know Job from job or palms from Psalms. It was all brand new again — a new faith and trust."

An "Experiencing God" class

and a Paul-like pastor produced a "Timothy" ready for ministry.

"Within six months I got my call," said Michael, who soon literally sold everything and moved his family to Graceville, Fla., to attend the Baptist Bible Institute, now the Baptist College of Florida.

"The Lord was doing a lot of speaking, and we were doing a lot of 'Yes, Lord,'" Michael said.

The Puskars listened to God and started working in a drug and alcohol rehab center in Florida, leading in the worship on Sunday mornings.

In Florida, Netta also began managing a subsidized housing complex — a ministry that continued when Michael enrolled at Southern.

Since coming to Southern, Michael and Netta's ministry

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RU 486 battle continues

WASHINGTON (BP) — After years of mishaps and misadventures, the abortion pill RU-486 is facing more trouble in its American debut, the Internet news site CNSNews.com reports. This time, the problems are coming from an unlikely cast of characters: the maker of an ulcer drug and, potentially, the maker of RU-486 itself, as well as some doctors and college health clinics.

Media reports have described a new reluctance on the part of some doctors to continue prescribing a second drug used with RU-486 in the abortion process. That's because the maker of misoprostol, a drug marketed for treatment of ulcers, sent a much-publicized letter to 200,000 health care providers in August warning them that the drug was not meant for use by pregnant women.

The letter to doctors, from the drug maker Searle, warned of "serious adverse events," such as "uterine hyperstimulation, rupture, and perforation," for off-label use. The company also cautioned that the long-term effects of misoprostol on children is unknown. Searle maintained that the company had been working on a draft letter for two years in conjunction with the FDA.

There are other problems for RU-486 looming on the horizon. The chairman of the House Commerce Committee, Rep. Tom Bliley, R-Va., raised questions and concerns about the Chinese company rumored to be manufacturing RU-486, Hua Lian Pharmaceutical Company. Bliley sent an Oct. 18 letter to the FDA asking about incidents in which the company allegedly sent a falsely labeled and branded drug into the United States. The letter further pointed out that the company has not gained FDA approval for manufacturing and exporting drugs to this country and questioned whether the company had a history of exporting contaminated drugs.

Looking back

10 years ago

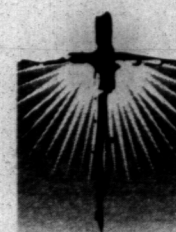
Victory Temple in Greenville, an African-American congregation sponsored by First Church, Greenville, celebrates three years of ministry with a standing-room-only crowd of 164 people in the mobile chapel provided by the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. Eddie Jones is pastor.

20 years ago

Through their newly-formed Christian Action Commission, Baptists in Jefferson Davis County promise to challenge the successful referendum to allow liquor sales in the county after they discover what they allege to be illegal signatures and other irregularities in the close vote.

50 years ago

Retired pastor A.L. O'Briant, a member of First Church, Grenada, is recognized for attending his 46th consecutive annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He has pastored more than 50 churches in the state and baptized more than 1,000 new believers in his 62-year ministry.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Newest 'Vessels' videotape now available

By Tim Nicholas
Staff Writer

SBC housing reservations accepted

Reservations for housing are now being accepted for the 2001 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 12-13 in the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans. To receive the SBC Housing Guide and Official Request Form, contact the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive director-treasurer's office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: bbbox@mbcb.org.

The latest edition of Vessels, the video magazine of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) that highlights Mississippi Baptists on mission, is now being distributed across the state.

The Fall 2000 edition (Vol. 6, No. 2) features:

- a three-segment series on Mississippi Baptists' camps — Camp Garawya in Clinton, the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union facility; Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko, the Royal Ambassadors facility; and Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

- a look at bivocational pastors in Mississippi.
- a two-minute witness from a serious Bible learner.

The camp series titles include "Garaywa: God's Refueling Station;" "Central Hills: God's Country;" and

Gulfshore: God's Condo." Each title came from comments made by counselors and campers who have testified that their lives were changed by their experiences at the camps.

The segments not only tell of God's influence at the camps, but also allow video viewers a glimpse at the excellent facilities available for off-season conferences for churches and associations.

The segment concerning bivocational pastors peeks in on the lives and ministries of three of Mississippi's hundreds of ministers who hold

down secular jobs alongside their ministerial positions.

Bivocational pastors profiled in the video include:

- Jeffrey Waldo, an attorney who serves as pastor of Martin Church, New Albany.

- James Edwards, a businessman who serves as pastor of Bethel Church, Coffeeville.

- Joe Young, a teacher who serves as pastor of Calvary Chapel, Charleston.

Bivocational ministers often refer to themselves as "doubly blessed" ministers, because of the dual roles they play in their communities and churches.

The two-

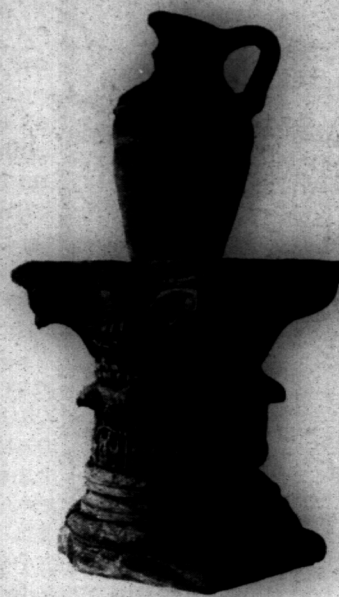
minute witness is from Janet Pope of Hattiesburg, who has memorized more than 11 books of the Bible.

She offers her suggestions for others who are considering "hiding God's Word" in their hearts.

The new vessels video is available from local associational offices or from the MBCB Broadcast Services Department. Convention board members, area leaders for Woman's Missionary Union and Men's Ministry, and area prayer coordinators also have copies.

Vessels is produced by the MBCB Broadcast Services Department through the support of the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

For more information, contact Farrell Blankenship, director of broadcast services, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3378 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 378. E-mail: fblankenship@mbcb.org.



AB trustees pass retiree increase, affirm CP

DALLAS (BP) — Trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) approved a 5% increase for most annuitants and adopted a resolution affirming the the SBC Cooperative Program (CP) during their Nov. 6-7 meeting in Dallas.

The increase in benefits was approved effective Jan. 1, 2001, for most annuitants receiving benefits established for periods of 60 months or longer.

The increase will apply to certain annuities funded from defined contribution accumulations, as well as Plan A retired and deferred benefits. Also receiving the increase will be persons eligible for International Mission Board past-service benefits (deferred or in pay status).

Persons still employed, who have deferred Plan A benefits, will receive the increase on Plan A when they annuitize that portion of their retirement program. The 5% increase will raise the Plan A benefit to 283% of its original formula benefit.

Trustees unanimously approved the resolution affirming the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified channel for supporting national and international missions and ministries.

The resolution stated: "...the trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention stand together with the churches and entities of the Southern Baptist Convention in their affirmation of the Cooperative Program."

The trustees also stated, "...we encourage all Southern Baptists to resist any effort that

would threaten to diminish the Cooperative Program and call upon the churches to maintain the historic partnership that has existed between the local congregations, associations, state conventions and Southern Baptist Convention entities."

Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins provided an overview of the staff's work in laying the foundation to incorporate expanded ministry assignments approved by the Southern Baptist Convention.

"As we offer new products and deliver new services," Hawkins told trustees, "we must be vigilant to continue to develop our people and demonstrate compassion."

John Jones, chief operating officer, reporting on third quarter Annuity Board operations, told trustees, "Workgroups are eagerly engaged in strategic projects that will allow us to add personal investing, IRAs and institutional investing during 2001."

James Merritt, SBC president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga., addressed the trustees and management staff during a Monday evening dinner.

In the midst of all the positive things happening in the SBC, Merritt challenged the trustees and staff, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis as you go about your work and witness."

Board chairman George Tous van Nijkerk presided as trustees approved a 2001 budget of \$49.2 million, a 7.95 percent increase over 2000.

The Annuity Board receives no Cooperative Program funds for operations, but pays all expenses from an advisory fee on each of the 13 investment funds available to participants in the board's various retirement plans.

All Cooperative Program money received by the board is paid as relief grants to needy retired ministers or denominational workers or their widows.

Based on valuation of the Protection Benefit Fund of the Church Annuity Plan, trustees approved extending a special billing credit to state conventions through the year 2004.

The program, established Jan. 1, 1995, waives state convention billing costs for the Protection Section of the Church Annuity Plan, a part of the plan that provides a survivor benefit and supplemental disability benefit to eligible participants.

There is no cost to the participant or church for the benefits that provide up to \$100,000 in survivor benefits and a supplemental disability benefit of \$500 per month.

The relief committee of trustees approved applications for 17 two-year monthly grants, 2 three-month monthly grants, 1 six-month expense grant, 5 two-year expense grants and 1 one-time grant.

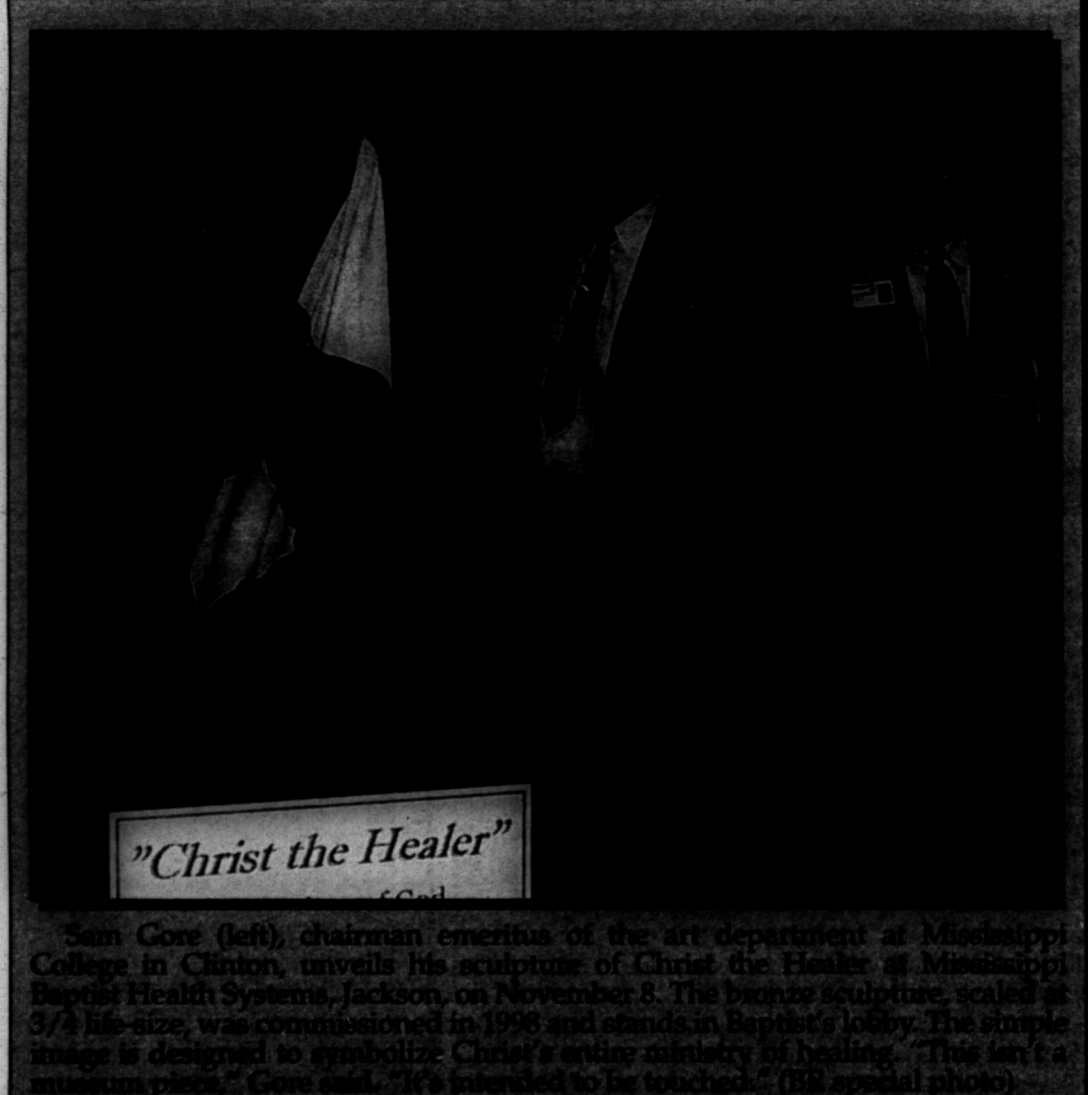
Seventeen applicants were declined for being outside guidelines.

Maximum supplemental assistance grants are \$200 per month for single persons and \$260 for couples. Fifteen individuals were added to the Adopt An Annuitant roll during the third quarter, and they receive an extra \$75 each month.

Other actions by the relief committee included approving a \$200 Christmas check for each relief recipient on the roll Dec. 1.

The trustee insurance committee, chaired by Richard D. Welch, reported on enhancements to the board's life and health products to be offered Jan. 1, 2001.

Christ the Healer debuts



"Christ the Healer"

Sam Gore (left), chairman emeritus of the art department at Mississippi College in Clinton, unveils his sculpture of Christ the Healer at Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, Jackson, on November 8. The bronze sculpture, scaled at 3/4 life-size, was commissioned in 1998 and stands in Baptist's lobby. The simple image is designed to symbolize Christ's entire ministry of healing. "This isn't a museum piece," Gore said. "It's intended to be touched." (BP special photo)

I AM THANKFUL...

To be a Mississippi Baptist!

That I have had the joy of working with thousands of Baptists across Mississippi for the last several years.

That I will spend Thanksgiving with my wife Shirley for the 35th year; with my daughter Melodi, son-in-law Tim, and granddaughter Madi; with son Rob, daughter-in-law Kimandria, and grandsons Trey and Ridge; and with daughter Mysti and son-in-law Phillip.

That this past year I was honored to preach in our two oldest churches in Mississippi — Ebenezer Church, Liberty, and Woodville Church, Woodville.

That this Thanksgiving we are not sending troops to war.

That I live in America which, even with its problems, challenges, and taxes, is still the place the rest of the world would love to live.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

That I live in a country where disputed elections are settled under the rule of law and not at the point of a gun.

That our wonderful Savior Jesus still saves, secures, and satisfies.

That spring is about four months away.

That in a world of family fragmentations and divorce, there are still some folks who celebrate 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries.

That we are still privileged to send missionaries, rather than receive them.

That in Mississippi it stays warmer more than it stays cold.

For the thousands of faithful givers whose stewardship makes ministry and missions possible around the world.

That in my lifetime I have only broken one bone.

For dear friends I have lost through death over the past year, because I know they are in good care in the Father's house.

For turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, and pecan pie.

For the blessings of God that are so abundant they cannot be contained on a list.

May God bless you during this Thanksgiving season, and may he help all of us to focus on what we have rather than what we do not have.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Texas Baptists reduce funding to SBC entities

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (ABP) — Texas Baptists agreed Oct. 30 to cut \$4.3 million from six Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) seminaries they say have abandoned some traditional Baptist beliefs and forced doctrinal conformity on their faculties and trustees.

Instead, the money will be spent on three theological schools in Texas.

The report of a special study committee was "overwhelmingly" approved, said convention officers who observed the show-of-hands vote from the platform. Other observers said the vote margin was 4-to-1 or greater.

The report had been the source of contentious debate, in Texas and beyond, for months. Supporters said the change was necessary because of a restrictive theological direction taken by the national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Opponents said the plan destroys the relationship of trust and cooperation that has existed between the national SBC and the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) since 1925.

The BGCT is still studying its relationship to the SBC mission agencies, with a report due next

year, which some believe will further distance Texas Baptists from those who control the national convention.

Before approving the report, messengers easily defeated an amendment that would have phased in the cuts over three years.

Messengers numbered 6,475 at the time of the show-of-hands vote.

A separate vote further reduced money the state will send to the SBC next year by another \$1.1 million, slashing funds to the SBC Executive Committee to a token \$10,000 and completely defunding the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

With one of every six Southern Baptists living in Texas, and 13% of the SBC's funding coming from the state, the cuts culminate several years of disagreement between conservative leaders of the SBC and the moderate-led BGCT, the largest SBC affiliate with some 2.7 million members.

A special committee conducted a six-month study of SBC seminaries before recommending the funding cut in September. The BGCT's 200-member Executive Board voted overwhelmingly

Sept. 26 to pass the committee's report on to the state convention.

In recommending the seminary plan to the convention, study committee chairman Bob Campbell said the new faith statement is called "an instrument of doctrinal accountability" and is being used to "demand creedal adherence" from those who teach in SBC seminaries.

He said it is inaccurate to say Texas Baptists are breaking off a 92-year relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention abruptly. "It has been decided over 21 years," he said, referring to the two-decade dominance of conservatives and fundamentalists in the SBC.

"Let us leave behind the constant battle with other Baptists," Campbell said. "We can no longer be embroiled with those who want to teach rigid creedalism."

Bubba Stahl of Boerne made the motion to phase in the defunding. "The change should be made gradually rather than suddenly, which is always the better way," he said.

Rick Davis of Midlothian, a study committee member, said students at Texas seminaries already are suffering by having to pay higher tuition than at SBC seminaries. And, he added, funding available to the SBC means "there is no reason for anyone to suffer if they use the money correctly."

Bob Dixon of Dallas, former head of Texas Baptist Men, argued against the defunding, saying, "It sounds to me like God's hand is on the graduates of the Southern Baptist seminaries."

Judy Battles of Arlington said the defunding was necessary so the BGCT can support schools that do not require teachers to sign "an un-Baptistic statement."

Before the discussion, Charles Wade, executive director of the Texas convention, said it was necessary to approve the plan to get the attention of

Southern Baptist leaders.

"[W]e need to do this because Southern Baptist leaders have shown greater willingness to talk with Texas Baptists in the last six weeks than ever before," Wade said. "If we vote to do this today and the churches heartily follow the recommendations adopted, then I believe we may have some influence with Southern Baptist leaders."

Wade said he hoped the Southern Baptist Convention would be persuaded to consider changes to the newly adopted "Baptist Faith and Message" statement to allow more differences of opinion and freedom of interpretation.

Albert Mohler, president of one of the defunded schools, said there is no provision in the plan for further discussion. "They didn't say 'We want a hearing.' They said, 'This is how we will fund the seminaries,'" said Mohler, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"Only time will tell whether any fruitful discussion between the SBC and BGCT leaders can take place," he continued. "The right conversation needs to take place with the right people. It would be wrong to try to close the door, but I don't see any openness."

Mohler said he is "profoundly disappointed" in the vote but not surprised, given the direction of the BGCT. He said Southern Seminary "will continue serving Southern Baptist churches" despite the defunding. "We're talking about a significant amount of money. It will take time to assess the impact ... but I am convinced Southern Baptists will generously support the six SBC seminaries."

William Crews, president of Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., said the action meant "not only a significant loss of money — and some will be more affected than others — but it is also a loss of partnership."

Homosexual activists' video targets schools

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elementary schools nationwide are the target markets for a new video designed by homosexual activists to teach tolerance for their lifestyles, according to a report by CNSNews.com, an Internet news site.

Spokespeople for the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in Chicago — where the film was recently released for marketing — did not return a telephone call for comment, but the group's Internet site outlined its members' awareness of criticism from parents, religious organizations, and family groups who have accused some homosexuals of demanding that special accommodations be made to support their activist beliefs.

"The following is a useful tool for times when we are called upon to refute the ridiculous charge that schools promote homosexuality," the GLSEN site detailed, suggesting members handle such claims by maintaining that their organization only "affirms" that homosexuals "enrich our society in many ways" rather than "promotes" the idea the alternative lifestyle is "preferable to being heterosexual."

The film is produced by Helen Cohen, an Academy Award winner who also worked on "It's Elementary," a homosexual education movie marketed as an aid for teachers and school administrators to teach tolerance. "That's a Family" differs from "It's Elementary" in that its target audience is elementary-level students rather than adults.

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Line Creek, Morton: Nov. 19; Sunday School, 10 a.m., New Wine Quartet with Tal Vardaman singing; 11 a.m., message by Scott Walters, pastor; lunch in fellowship hall at noon; 1:30 p.m. cemetery annual meeting.

Ninth Annual Drive-Through Nativity will be held at Algoma Church, Algoma, on Dec. 15 and 16 from 6-9:30 p.m. Don Smith is pastor. For additional information, call the church at (662) 489-5846.

Baptist Health Systems will hold a luncheon seminar on Nov. 15 entitled "Estrogen and Breast Cancer - A Differing View" to discuss the linkage between estrogen levels and breast cancer. The seminar is scheduled for 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. at Baptist's Women's Center. Lunch will be provided. Register by noon on Nov. 14 by calling (601) 948-6262 or 1-800-948-6262.

A total of 48 people from Hillcrest Church, Jackson; Cleary Church, Florence; First Church, Terry; Hickory Ridge Church, Florence; Mt. Zion Church, Florence; and Star Church, Star; traveled to Los Terrenos, N.L. Mexico to assist missionaries Wayne and Nina Fleming. The group conducted Vacation Bible Schools and helped with construction of an orphanage. Representatives of Hillcrest Church have traveled to help the Flemings each year since 1984.

Three pastors completed a 12-day study tour of Israel focusing on Biblical History and Archaeology, Oct. 5-17. The study was for credit in the Doctor of Ministry degree program at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson. Pictured are Donnie South, pastor of Franklin Church in Flora; Randall Jackson, pastor of Leesburg Church in Rankin County; and Grant McElveen, pastor of Puckett Church in Puckett.



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Dedication service of the new worship center at Country Woods Church, Jackson, will be held Nov. 19 at 10:30 a.m. For additional information call the church at (601) 371-7955.

Carl Baugh, founder and director of creation evidence museum in Glen Rose, Texas will be at Washington Church, Washington, on Nov. 19. He will present three sessions, 9:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.; and 5 p.m. More than 30 years of his life have been spent researching the atmospheric conditions before the Genesis flood. From his research he has synthesized The Creation in Symphony Model. Howard M. Peak is pastor. For more information, call (601) 445-4855.

Mother/Daughter Get Together will be held at Mt. Pisgah Church, Enid, Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Special guest will be New Spirit.

Church Bazaar will be held at Beacon Church, Hattiesburg, on Dec. 2 from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. For additional information call the church at (601) 583-9807.

The Student Life 2001 Tour will be hosted by First Church, Jackson, on March 23-24. Friday session begins at 7:30 p.m. Saturday session is from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Voddie Baucham, who currently serves as associate instructor at Houston's College of Biblical Studies, speaker. For additional information or to register, call the Student Life office at (800) 718-2267.



Couples from First Church, Greenwood, participated in a Marriage Retreat held in Shocco Springs, Ala., Oct. 27-28. Pictured (from left, seated) are Bill Gardner, Aubrey Falls, John Hughes, and Daryl Woodcock; (second row) Terry Gardner, Carol Falls, Cindy Hughes, Judy Woodcock, Betty Sue Wilson, and Bobby Wilson; (third row) John Harville, Deborah Harville, Mary Jones, and Woodrow Jones.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NIV

November 16, 2000

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.



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Area Keyboard Festivals - 2001

Thursday, January 25, 2001 - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

AREA LOCATION

- Area 2 FBC, Tupelo, 300 North Church Street (All Categories)
- Area 4 Fairview BC, Columbus, 127 Airline Road (All Categories)
- Area 5 FBC Clinton, 100 E. College Street (**Category 1, 1A only**)
- Area 7 FBC McComb, 1700 Delaware Avenue (All Categories)
- Area 8 FBC Hattiesburg, 510 West Pine Street (All Categories)
- Area 8 FBC, Laurel, 605 Fifth Avenue (All Categories)

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- Bob Robinson
- Slater Murphy
- Beverly Coleman, Bill Bacon
- Levon Gray, Carol Watts
- Kathy Vail, Mark Moore
- Earline Carter

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- C=Church, H=Home
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- C-662-328-2924
- C-601-924-6716
- C-601-684-2971
- H-601-267-7443
C-601-544-0100
C-601-649-5710

Friday, January 26, 2001 - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

- Area 1 Hernando BC, Hernando, 11 E. Center Street (All Categories)
- Area 5 Crossgates BC, Brandon, 8 Crossroads Road (**Categories II, IIA, III, IV only**)
- Area 6 Poplar Springs Drive BC, 4032 Poplar Springs Dr., Meridian (All Categories)
- Area 9 FBC Biloxi, 917 Howard Avenue (All Categories)

- Barry Tweedy
- Tommy Creel
- Harry Tillery
- Leon Bedsole

- C-662-421-6361
- C-601-825-2562
- C-601-485-5106
- C-228-374-3310

Saturday, January 27, 2001 - 9:30 a.m. - Noon

- Area 3 Emmanuel BC, Grenada, 245 Meadow Brook Road (All Categories)
- Area 5 Alta Woods BC, Jackson, 168 Colonial Drive (**Categories II, IIA, III, IV only**)

- Barry Worrell
- Wyndy South

- C-662-226-5316
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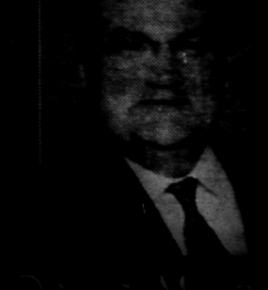
Martin & Sheri Williams
Country Woods Baptist Church, Jackson



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SCHEDULE

Friday, March 23

6:00 pm	Registration
6:30	Announcements (in the auditorium)
7:00	Session 1
8:00	Session 2
9:00	Creative Worship

Saturday, March 24

8:30 am	Announcements (in the auditorium)
8:45	Session 3
10:00	Break with refreshments
10:30	Session 4
11:45	Lunch and Open Performance
1:45 pm	Session 5
2:30	Creative Worship
3:30	Closing Time/Home

For more information, please contact the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
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November 17 - December 7, 2000

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ALONE WITH GOD - Of all the times faced on this sod. Worst would be "alone without God." But consider our lives. the potential of them. When filled with the fruit of "alone with Him." Bro. Jim Bryant

Missionary Mark Alexander in Argentina reports that a new believer in a cell group recently led her sister to begin studying the Bible using the evangelistic materials through which she was won to the Lord. Pray for her as she witnesses to her sister and her mother.

Bill Kneisly is a church planter missionary in Burlington, Kans. Pray for the truckers' chapel Beto Truck Stop to attract more of the 5,000 trucks a day going by. Pray for Welda, Kans. (56 homes) and Lone Elm, Kans. (19 homes), where there is little or no evangelical witness.

For (1) Season of Prayer for International Missions (WMU); (2) Praise the Lord for the safety of missionaries Roger and Kathy Sikes and their family when their car was stolen in Cote D'Ivoire. God caused a river to be flooded, the bandits couldn't escape and the Sikes recovered their vehicle.

New International Service Corps workers Will and Debbie Martin sent their visa applications to the Belgian Consulate on May 25. The official in the consulate has assured them that everything is in order. To date, they have not had a reply. Pray for expediency in the approval process.

For (1) Reconciliation-Celebrate Jesus 2000; Grace Temple BC, Gulfport; 6:30-9pm (Strategic Initiatives Dept.); (2) Please pray today for President Charles Ghankay Taylor of Liberia.

For (1) Baptist Building STAFF PLANNING WEEK; (2) Pray for the Pogoro people in the Ifakara area of Tanzania. Due to the lack of rain during the long rainy season from March through June, many had poor crops. Pray that they will still get enough rain to produce a good harvest.

Even though Reunion is an island in the Indian Ocean, it is part of France. The French government is considering a law that could make witnessing a crime and give the government the power to close churches that try to convert others. Pray that this law will not be passed.

Give thanks to the Lord for the return of a Ugandan national missionary's two sons! Last August, rebels in northern Uganda abducted these two boys. Both boys finally escaped and are now with their parents. Pray for this family as they continue to live in an insecure place.

For (1) Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Committee Meeting; Baptist Building; 9am; (2) Mississippi Baptist Convention Board meeting; Baptist Building; 10 am; (3) Please pray for Prime Minister Selim Al-Huss of Lebanon.

Christian persecution in Laos has never been worse! Knowing that all things work together for good, pray that current persecution will give way to the grace of God and that those being persecuted will look to Jesus Christ. Pray for God's mercy on behalf of those hurt by the Communist system.

Several non-Christian religious cults are flourishing in various parts of China. Eastern Lightning, one of the fastest growing cults, veils itself as Christian, but claim that Jesus is a woman who lives in a specific province. Pray that earnest seekers will not be blinded by this perversion.

Pray that God will raise up mature leaders among the Waci (Wah-chee) believers of Benin and Togo. Ask God to burden the believers with the lostness of the Waci people and the need to reach out to villages where there is no Christian witness.

Thanksgiving Day; (2) Within the last six months, pastors and volunteers have listed over 120 contacts and numerous inquiries in five villages in Malaysia. Give thanks to God for each contact and inquiry and pray that there will be adequate follow up for each one.

Pray for missionaries Dan and Brenda Caldwell as they get their licenses as boat "skipper" and mechanic to serve more effectively among the people in the vast Amazon region of Brazil. Pray for the safety of the missionaries as they spend a great deal of time in treacherous waters.

The work of Satan is nowhere more visible than in the Buddhist and animistic religious system in Laos. Over the centuries, vain belief in idols and spirits have fortified Laos in spiritual darkness. Pray that Christ will break this cycle and the current generation will know Him.

For (1) Special Ministries Retreat; Camp Garaywa, 17-18th (SS); (2) Wan Noh, church planter pastoring the Korean Baptist Church in Hillsboro, Oreg. Pray for the need of more core members for a church plant that is one year old. Two of the five core families have moved back to South Korea.

Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, has been said to be the most unevangelized city in the world. Pray for a spiritual awakening for the residents of Belgrade. Pray for the handful of existing believers to have boldness and wisdom to share their faith.

Missionaries serving on the Project Taipei Team covet your prayers for a Taiwanese pastor who is making plans to equip up to 300 young Christians to begin cell group churches among Taipei's 5 youth. Ask God to open doors for this exciting ministry.

Due to the great numbers of internal refugees responding to the gospel in Colombia, more Colombian workers are needed to carry out the work of evangelism, discipleship, worship and leadership development. Give thanks for the Colombian Christians who have already joined this work.

Praise God for Christian workers who travel into remote areas of China to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Braving nature's elements and some unique modes of transportation, those committed to claiming minority groups for Christ continue to go to the unreached masses.

After much prayer for the Cururu of Bolivia, God worked in the heart of their chief, who asked that believers from Urubicha return to his village to explain the gospel! Upon returning, one couple accepted Christ and many others expressed interest. Pray for continued openness.

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HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Leverett, Best, and Baker

Meadowood Church, Amory, held deacon ordination on Oct. 1. Picture (from left) are Randall Leverett, Dave Best, and Don Baker. Lloyd Sweatt is pastor.

Sallis Church, Sallis, ordained James Burrell on Oct. 8. Twenty-four deacons and ministers took part in the ceremony. Burrell accepted the pastorate at County Line Church, Carthage, in September. Pictured with Burrell (left) is Thomas Wicker, pastor of Sallis Church.



Burrell and Wicker



Members of Forest Hill Church, Jackson

Members of Forest Hill Church, Jackson, recently toured the International Mission Board in Richmond, Va. Mary Lee Schaefer, JoAnne Chandler, and Nancy Humphrey were hosted by Mike and Kay Anders, former church members.

John Johnson (right) is pictured receiving a perfect attendance pin for 40 years in Sunday School from Dennis Patterson, pastor of Salem Church, Lauderdale Association.



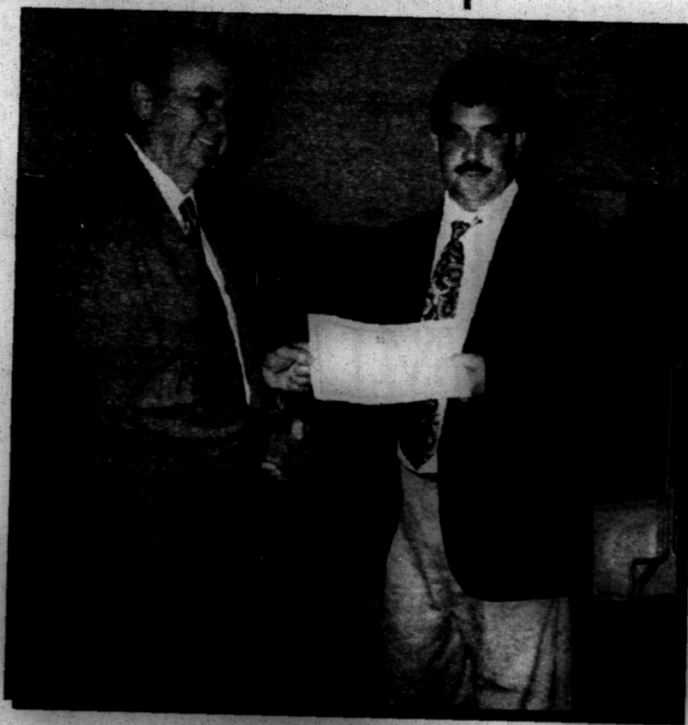
Patterson and Johnson



Chancelor, Jones, Holifield, and Greer

David Holifield was licensed as a minister of youth by Russell Church, Meridian, on Aug. 20. He assumed the position of minister of youth with Russell Church effective Sept. 1. Pictured (from left) are Clay Chancelor, pastor; James Jones, chairman of deacons; Holifield; and Jewell Greer, minister of music.

Joel Thomas was ordained as a deacon on Sept. 24 at D'Lo Church, D'Lo. Pictured (from left) are Robert Sones, pastor; and Thomas.



Sones and Thomas

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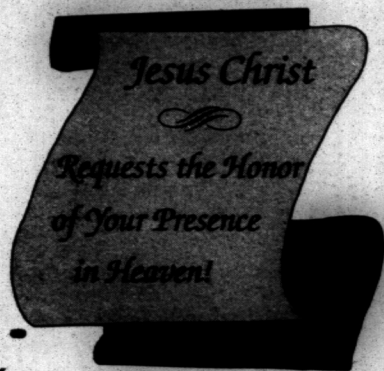
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NAMES IN THE NEWS



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(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



GAs of Belden Church, Belden

GAs of Belden Church, Belden, received charms for their bracelets for completing projects in their workbooks.

Pictured (from left, top row) are Tiffany Sudduth, Kandace Langley, Jennifer Whitten, Brady Watson; (front row) Lara

Nanney and Hayley Asters. Not pictured: Courtney Kyle. Lynn Clemmer is GA director. Leaders are Faye Clayton and Laurie Phillips.



Turnage and Wilkinson

James David (Jim) Turnage was ordained as a deacon at Newhebron Church, Newhebron, on Oct. 15. Pictured (from left) are Turnage and David R. Wilkinson, pastor.

First Church, Collinsville, ordained Ken Butts (left) and Jack Cook on Sept. 10. Hal Bates is pastor.



Butts and Cook

Louisiana Baptist Convention recently appointed Randy Thompkins as director of Stewardship and Cooperative Program Division. Thompson previously served as Church Growth and Sunday School consultant for eight years at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

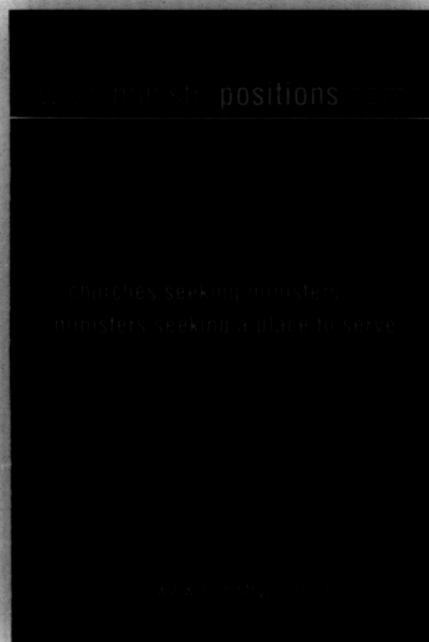


Paul Mayhan was ordained to the ministry at Shiloh Church, Calhoun Association, on Sept. 24. Pictured (from left) are John Hearn, interim pastor; and Mayhan.

MLSMO goal exceeded

Hebron Church, Jones Association, set a goal of \$1,200 for the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. The goal was met and the WMU director challenged the church to give \$100 for each letter of the title "Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering" and raise the goal to \$2,200. A total of \$2,307 was received. The church also gave \$250 to the Gideon Ministry and \$180 for World Hunger Day on Oct. 15. In a September business meeting the church voted to give a scholarship to one of the young

men of the church in the amount of \$2,400 for his seminary education. Hebron Church averages about 80 in Sunday School. "This church has a mission vision which begins at home and extends around the world," said Charles Gordon, interim pastor.



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YOUTH MINISTER POSITION AVAILABLE at Perkinston Baptist Church in the Gulf Coast Association. Please contact the church at (601) 928-7532, or send resume to P.O. Box 263, Perkinston, MS 39573.

CHURCH SECRETARY NEEDED. Full-time; good computer skill. Please submit resume to Daniel Memorial Baptist Church, 3784 Terry Road, Jackson, MS 39212, ATTN: Personnel Committee. Phone (601) 376-4100 or fax (601) 376-4110.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC needed for First Baptist Church of Byram. This is a fast growing area. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Byram, 7541 Siwell Road, Jackson, MS 39212.

FULL-TIME PASTOR NEEDED FOR Bay Vista Baptist Church. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 2485 Pass Road, Biloxi, MS 39531.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC, PART-TIME PIANIST. Send resume, references, and picture to: Music Search Committee, Kilmichael Baptist Church, P.O. Box 142, Kilmichael, MS 39747. Request application (662) 262-5507. Fax resume (662) 262-5570.

PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR. Send resume to Trinity Baptist Church, 2610 Napoleon Ave., Pearl, MS 39208.

SEEKING FULL-TIME YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTER for FBC Waynesboro. Resumes may be faxed to (601) 735-7066 or mailed to FBC, ATTN: Pastor, 814 Azalea Drive, Waynesboro, MS 39367.

ENON BAPTIST CHURCH, Walthall County, is seeking to fill two part-time staff positions. Persons interested in serving as either minister of music or minister of youth should send resumes to the attention of the applicable search committee and addressed to: Enon Baptist Church, 1451 Hwy. 583 N., Jayess, MS 39641.

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HELP SOUGHT

Editor:

I would like to ask the help of my fellow Mississippi Baptists for a book I am currently completing. Servant Publishing has accepted my book "Holidays and Holy Days" for release in their 2002 fall season. In addition to the information on holidays and holiday customs, they have asked that I include a chapter giving guidelines for making decisions about holidays. Since Halloween is one of the most difficult holidays for Christians, this is the one they have asked me to use as an example.

If you are willing to help me, please contact me at 2934 Meadow Forest Dr., Jackson, MS 39212, or (601) 371-8760. E-mail: Srichard02@aol.com.

Susan E. Richardson
Jackson

NIV AVAILABLE

Editor:

I read with interest the letter of Russell Bradford titled, SBC leaning liberal. The writer mentioned that this quarter's Adult Sunday School Material from LifeWay left the KJV completely out. He stated that this is the only material that we can get.

I seem to remember that meetings were held all through our state and possibly in each association, to acquaint church leaders as to the new material that was coming. The two choices for adults were "Family Bible Study" and "Explore the Bible."

I checked the material in "Family Bible Study" Adult KJV. Scriptures printed for each lesson were from the KJV. Quotations from the NIV were used to some extent in the material.

I am interested in learning from the writer how many of these quotations were not in accord with the Greek/Hebrew. Many of us do not know Greek/Hebrew.

James K. Burke
Waynesboro

GET BACK TO KJV

Editor:

In the October 12 issue of The Baptist Record, there was a letter from R. Bradford with which I wholly agree. I totally agree with his assessment of the NIV — "Non-Inspired Version." Praise the Lord for his stand. Some one has to speak up in opposition of the version. It seems as if all our literature is referring to this version. What is wrong with the King James Version? One of the main reasons for my rejection of the NIV is because it leaves out one of the most important verses in Scripture, that being Acts 8:37, which tells the only way a person is to be saved. Why is this liberal version being pushed in most of our literature and in a lot of

Southern Baptist churches? Why is this version being chosen over the King James? Another example is the New World Translation, where not a verse or a word but one letter is changed which changes the whole meaning of this verse, and that is John 1:1 where it says "And the word was God" the New World Translation says "And the word was 'a' God." Jesus is not just "a" God, but he is God. I think we should be very careful what we accept in these days in which we live when Satan is trying every tactic to destroy the Word. Let us be wise in our choices and not be accepting versions of the Bible that add to and take away from God's Holy Scripture. If we continue on this path, many churches will be looking for other sources for Sunday School literature and other materials. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (KJV) God help us in these days to stand firm on the Word.

Harry Thornton
Vicksburg

STOP MURDERING BABIES

Editor:

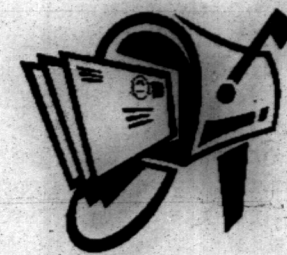
Abortion is the murder of God's precious life that has no choice — 39,000,000 since *Roe v. Wade* and counting. I believe we need more pastors, churches, teachers of God's Word saying abortion is murder, it's wrong, but God does love and forgive.

We know we can't depend on the President and other leaders. They approved RU-486 in September. A living, partially-delivered baby is killed with a cut into his skull, and cries, "Why? Don't you love me?" and they watch him die.

Embryo research, they say, cures diseases. What will be next? In America, a couple can admit the murder of child, is tried, and then set free. God help us. God help the children.

Please, go hug your children. Many couples are waiting or wish to. Tell the President, leaders, judges, stop murdering our babies; they have a right to life — God only takes a life or gives one.

Barbara Peterson
Carrollton, AL



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The William Carey College Classical Guitar Concert Series will present classical guitarist Mary Akerman in concert Nov. 27 at 7 p.m. in the Lucile Parker Gallery on the Hattiesburg campus. Akerman recently performed at the 2000 Guitar Foundation of America Festival in San Antonio, Texas. A resident of Atlanta, she teaches classical guitar at Kennesaw State University. She received both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Georgia and earned a doctor-

ate in performance at Florida State University. She is the recipient of several awards, including the 1985 Concours International Radio France award. Admission is \$3 for students and senior citizens, and \$5 for the general public and can be purchased at the door. For more information call (601) 582-6183 or 582-6175.

The annual Bobby Halford Holiday Baseball Camp will be held Dec. 27-29 on the William Carey College (WCC) campus in Hattiesburg, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. each

day. The camp is for ages 7 to 17 and will include fundamental aspects of all phases of the game with individualized instruction. Cost of the session is \$95, which includes instruction, noon meals, and camp T-shirt. Head coach Bobby Halford has directed WCC baseball teams to 11 regional tournaments in the past 15 seasons. Applications may be obtained by calling the baseball office at (601) 582-6110, the external relations office at (601) 582-6192, or write Coach Bobby Halford, William Carey College, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

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USED CHURCH PEWS. Contact Bethel Baptist Church at (601) 587-4661.

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FBC OF GRAVETTE, ARKANSAS is seeking a full-time pastor. We will be accepting resumes until Nov. 15, 2000. Please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, FBCG, P.O. Box 824, Gravette, AR 72736.

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HODGE BAPTIST CHURCH, HODGE, LA., is seeking an individual to serve as minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Search Committee, Hodge Baptist Church, P.O. Drawer 340, Hodge, LA 71247.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The suffering servant

Isaiah 53

By Heather Cumberland

Before you read this column, please take a moment to read Isaiah 53. Even if you have read it a hundred times before, please read it again. Before you read it, however, ask God to reveal to you something in this passage that you have never seen or thought of before.

This passage is a prophetic message concerning Jesus' life and death. It begins by telling us that "he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him" (Is. 53:2).

I believe that the reason many of the Jews did not accept Jesus as their king is because they were expecting someone with money and prestige. They did not understand that Jesus' kingdom was not of this world but of Heaven.

I have heard celebrities say before that the only bad thing about being rich and famous is that they never know if their friends like them for who they really are or because they have money.

Think about it; if God sent Jesus to earth with money, power, and prestige many people would have followed him strictly because he was "the one to know."

By coming with "nothing in his appearance" (v. 2), Jesus knew that the people who followed him did so because they had enough faith in him to believe he was who he said he was.

Isaiah 53:5 should touch the heart of any born-again believer. Christ went through horrific suffering and pain so that we

could know what peace feels like. He was wounded so that we could be healed. This healing may be a physical healing, but it is also an emotional and spiritual healing.

Has there been a time in your life when you were so wounded physically, emotionally, or spiritually that you thought of giving up? Maybe you are going through that time right now.

These are the times we must remember that Christ is there to give us comfort and hope when it seems as though there is no hope. It is by his wounds that we are healed; we only need to step back and allow God to begin healing our wounds.

When my father died a couple of years ago I was wounded. My spirit was crushed. I could not understand why God would take him out of this world so soon.

It was not until several months after he died that I began

to allow God to heal my wounds. Once God healed my wounds, I began to feel at peace again.

"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth" (v. 7). Every time Herod or Pilate questioned Jesus he remained silent (Matt. 27:12-14; Mk. 14:60-61; Lk. 23:8-9).

When the people were hurling insults at him and striking his face, he did not retaliate. He carried the burden for our sins to the cross and he did so without regret. That is how much Jesus loves us.

The last part of verse seven compares Jesus to a sheep or a lamb. This is an important comparison because Israelites were instructed by God to sacrifice sheep in order to atone for their sins.

By placing their sins on the lamb and sacrificing it, they were symbolically letting go of their sins. That is what Jesus did for us. God laid the sins of every human being on Jesus (v. 6b) while he was on the cross. When Jesus died, he was the sacrifice for every person from that point on.

The very last verse of Chapter 53 sums up what Jesus did for us. "He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors" (v. 12).

Intercession, as defined by Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, is the act of intervening between parties with a view to reconcile differences.

Jesus intercedes on our (the transgressors') behalf to reconcile sin that we commit against God. Through Jesus' death we have forgiveness of sin. This does not mean that we will never have to pay the consequences of our sin. Jesus did not come to give us freedom from sin, but freedom from sin.

If sin has taken control of your life and it seems as though there is no hope, remember that Christ died so there would be hope.

Pray that God will forgive you and that he will help you turn from your sin. Then and only then will you be free from sin.

Cumberland is advertising coordinator for *The Baptist Record*.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Demonstrating commitment

Acts 14:1-26

By Wayne VanHorn

Today's lesson focuses on the commitment necessary to do the work of the Lord in a hostile environment.

Continuing despite opposition (14:1-3). Luke tells us that Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium after their expulsion from the region of Pisidian Antioch (13:51). At Iconium they followed their usual pattern of going first to the synagogue to bear witness of Jesus to the Jews.

Luke reminds us that a "great number of Jews and Gentiles believed" (14:1). The Gentiles in question most likely were the Greek "God-fearers" who had converted to Judaism and thus were in attendance at the synagogue.

After this brief notice of success, Luke reminds us once again that the Gospel never

spread without opposition. Jews who refused to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised by the prophets took proactive steps to disrupt the ministry of Paul and Barnabas.

The intensity of the opposition is a good gage of the effectiveness of that ministry. The unbelieving Jews embittered the minds of the Gentiles against the Christian brothers.

Did they quit? No! They were committed to Jesus; therefore, they were committed to Jesus' mission. They continued for a long time speaking the word boldly to them even in the face of antagonistic threats and bitter opposition.

Their love for Jesus was greater than their fear of man's hatred. The Lord confirmed the message with "signs and wonders."

Continuing despite rejection (14:4-7). The city of Iconium was divided. Some people believed and followed the apostles. Others disbelieved and followed the Jews (14:4).

After some time had passed the opposition plotted "to mistreat them and stone them." The mistreatment included everything from insults to abuse. The prospect of death by stoning brought Paul to the threshold of death that he once approvingly watched Stephen cross (7:57-60).

Luke does not tell us how Paul and Barnabas discovered the plot against them, but only that they fled, or took refuge, in the cities of Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding region. Once again, God used persecution to promote his evangelistic efforts and the spread of the Gospel to new areas (see 8:1-4; 11:19; 13:50).

Though rejected by the masses of Iconium, Paul and Barnabas did not quit. They simply sowed their precious seed in another field. Luke never equates their flight to a lack of faith or to weakness. At

any rate, God continued to use his committed disciples.

Continuing despite violence (14:19-22a). Paul healed a lame man in Lystra resulting in the local populace treating him and Barnabas as gods (14:8-13). The apostles used the occasion to turn the people's attention toward God (14:14-18).

Luke returns to his theme of persistent opposition in 14:19. Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuaded the crowd against the apostles. No mention is made of Barnabas at this point but Paul was stoned (14:19), perhaps because he was the chief speaker (14:12).

Thinking that Paul was dead, a testimony to the severity of the stoning, the people drug him outside the city. The disciples surrounded Paul. No description of their behavior is given. Perhaps they were fearful and yet hopeful as they surrounded him to pray. Luke casually says, "he got up and went back into the city" (14:20).

Did this act of violence force the apostles to quit? No! They went on to Derbe, preached the good news and won many people to Christ (14:21).

Undaunted by the opposition, rejection, and violence they had experienced they retraced their steps through Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch, to strengthen and to encourage the disciples. They committed themselves to the task of helping new believers strengthen their commitment to the Lord (14:22).

Continuing to completion (14:25-26). Paul and Barnabas returned to preach in Perga, where this portion of the land journey had begun (13:13-14). They then boarded a ship at the nearby seaport of Attalia.

A quick perusal of a map will show that they took the long way home, choosing to revisit and to strengthen the fledgling churches rather than seek personal comfort or safety. They never quit. They saw the job through to the very end.

Verse 26 concludes with the word "completed" (NIV) or "fulfilled" (KJV). Paul and Barnabas had done all that the Holy Spirit had sent them out to do. We too should be committed to the task of world evangelism until the job is done!

VanHorn is pastor of First Church, Columbia.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of events in the lives of churches and individuals in the Baptist community.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record should be typed (or typewritten) on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Prof: Depression isn't sin or faith weakness

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — If life can be compared to a journey, clinical depression can be considered a detour along the way, a professor and coun-

cipleship course, "Strength for the Journey: a Biblical Perspective on Discouragement and Depression."

LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention produced the nine-week course written by James Porowski, professor of pastoral care and counseling at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., and Paul Carlisle, professor of pastoral care and counseling at Midwestern Seminary.

"Depression is not a sin or a weakness in faith as some Christians fear," Howell told seniors attending the Chautauqua, sponsored by LifeWay, "but you can't live with it ongoing without getting relief from it."

Howell, who is also a Christian counselor, said he first advises people who come to him with symptoms of depression

to receive a thorough physical exam from their primary care physicians.

"The challenge of coping with depression takes more than making up your minds to feel better. And the challenge needs to start with your physician," he said.

If medication is recommended, Howell said, it alone cannot cure depression.

"It gives you help in dealing with depression and relief from the physiological symptoms, but you will have to deal with some of the symptoms through therapeutic measures," he said.

Howell listed several "circumstantial hindrances" that get in the way of emotional and spiritual health and that can potentially lead to discouragement or depression:

- Unresolved or wrong anger: "Anger can become a destructive force in our lives, and some unresolved anger lingers because of our unwillingness to forgive those who have hurt us."
- Losses. "We deal with losses even as children, say, when we lose a pet. As we come into our senior years, losses could mean the death of a spouse."

- Family issues. "Brokenness in family, such as divorce or death of a child, can break down relationships that can lead to discouragement or depression."
- Stress. "Fifty percent of many types of depression come out of stress," Howell said

good stress (a hectic vacation schedule) or bad stress (work overload) can both lead to depression.

"Christians have to learn to say 'no' to some things even though it might be difficult. It can cost us emotionally and physically to do too much."

- Harmful or poor choices. "We all look back and say, 'I wish

I had or had not done that. Self-forgiveness is essential to overcome the guilt, shame, or despair caused by our own behavior."

While depression can seem daunting, Howell said a four-stage biblical model of change and growth is offered in the Strength for the Journey workbook.

Stage one is awareness, "seeing God's new direction for our lives," Howell said. Stop denying there is a problem and admit it can't be handled alone.

The second stage is understanding, "recognizing and accepting God's guidance for us."

Stage three is action. Determine specific actions that can be taken to deal with discouragement or depression, such as reducing stress, going to a therapist, exercising more, or eating right, he said.

Change is the fourth and final stage. Live more of life with the new behaviors than with the old, he urged.

The Strength for the Journey workbook may be purchased through LifeWay Church Resources Customer Service, 1-800-458-2772, through a LifeWay Christian Store or the online store, www.lifeway-stores.com.

About 700 senior adults attended the Chautauqua conference, Oct. 23-27, sponsored by LifeWay's adult discipleship department.



DEPRESSION IS THE SUBJECT — John Howell (left), professor emeritus at Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., talks with Harold (center) and Dortha Palmour of First Church, Lufkin, Texas, following a Chautauqua class. (BP photo)

selor told senior adults attending a national conference, Oct. 23-27 at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay Conference Center in North Carolina.

"Twenty million Americans face depression, and some of those are in our churches," John Howell, professor emeritus at Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., said during a seminar in which he taught the dis-

Counselor helping couples reclaim marriage

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Falling in love is the easy part of marriage. The work begins after the vows are exchanged, a speaker, counselor, author, and founder of a marriage enrichment ministry said.

John Gries, of Colorado Springs, Colo., told about 200 couples attending a Fall Festival of Marriage at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay Conference Center, Oct. 27-29 in North Carolina, how they could achieve sex, romance, affection, intimacy, and pleasure in their marriages.

Married 22 years with six children, Gries said he and his wife, Cathy, founded a marriage enrichment ministry, Making 'til Death Do Us Part a Reality, 12 years ago after being inspired at a Fall Festival event. The couple recently moved from Reisterstown, Md., where they were members of Northwest Church, to Colorado Springs when Gries was transferred in his paying job as an insurance agent.

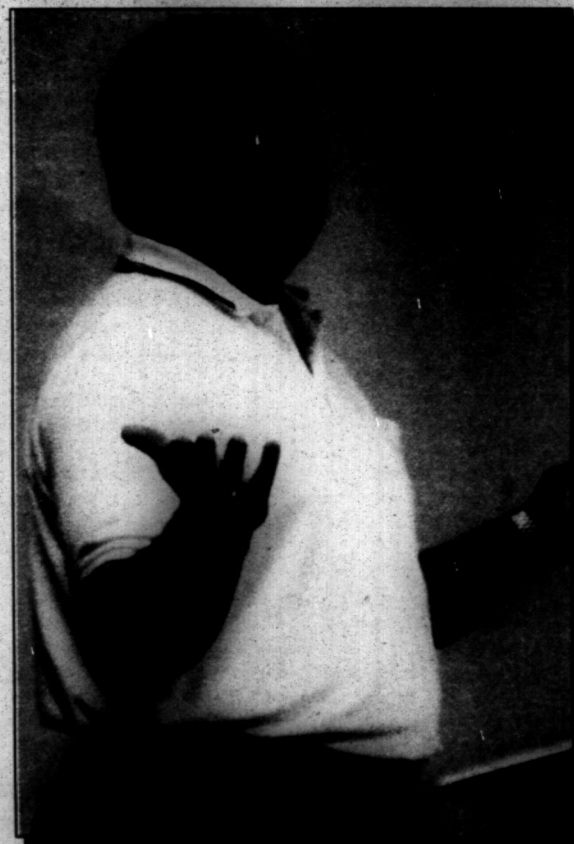
Gries, who counsels married couples, said the seven complaints he hears most often are people saying they used to:

- be so romantic.
- have excitement in their marriage.
- be so affectionate.
- talk more.
- make time for each other.
- give each other little gifts.
- have sex all the time.

"Jesus intended marriage to be happy for you. God expects regular sex in marriage, and sex is a learning process," he told the couples. So Gries has whipped up a seven-ingredient recipe for reclaiming sex, romance, affection, intimacy, and pleasure in marriages, "and every ingredient is very important."

Gries has written a book, "Sex 101: Over 350

Creative Ways to Combine Sex, Romance and Affection." In the area of humor, "we need to lighten up. We live in a downer world to a big degree, but we have something different. We have the hope of the living Jesus Christ."



MARRIAGE COUNSELOR — John Gries, of Colorado Springs, Colo., tells about 200 couples attending a Fall Festival of Marriage conference at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay Conference Center, Oct. 27-29, how they could achieve sex, romance, affection, intimacy, and pleasure in their marriages. (BP photo)

Gries told couples they need to act more childlike every now and then.

"How long has it been since you've tickled each other or roughhoused or just horsed around?" he asked.

Concerning communication, Gries said people are "bombarded daily with communication, but we have a power failure in many marriages when it comes to the area of communication."

Communication is essential for deep levels of intimacy, he said.

He listed several ways to kick start communication in a marriage.

- Ask your spouse to tell three specific things that happened to them today and how they felt about them.
- Take a walk together.
- Take a ride together (turn off the radio).
- Sit down in the evenings and share a cup of tea or coffee.

- Read a book of mutual interest and share with each other about it.
- Start a hobby together.

Gries advised the couples to take a time inventory for one week and find out where they are spending most of their hours.

Both men and women can experience problems sexually, and the best way to handle it is to talk about it, he said.

In being teachable, the sixth ingredient, Gries said husbands and wives are both teachable in ways that could lead to more satisfactory sexual relations, he said.

"We are teachable in the areas of timing, stimulation, and understanding more about each others' natures," he said.

The adult discipleship department of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention sponsors Fall Festivals.

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NUQ ZYAH LF CYH, D
FNAYKC UYZH LK NUQ
HDI YM NAYJGZQ; DKH
UQ VKYEQU NUQO
NUDN NAJFN LK ULO.

KDUJO YKQ: FQXQK

Clue: N = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-Two: Thirty-Two.